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SUBJECT: SOUTHEAST TURKEY PRESS SUMMARY FOR MARCH 17, 2005

This is the Southeastern Turkey press summary for March 17, 2005. Please note that Turkish press reports often contain errors or exaggerations; AmConsulate Adana does not vouch for the accuracy of the reports summarized here.

POLITICAL, SECURITY, HUMAN RIGHTS

EVRENSEL: U.S. pressure mounting on Syria has been distressing the Turkish citizens living in Hatay province. Mehmet Karasu, Chairperson of Hatay Social Solidarity and Culture Association, criticizing the Turkish government for siding with the U.S., said "U.S. threats against Middle East will gravely affect Hatay and people will migrate from Syria to Turkey. All the people in Hatay should come out on to the streets to protest a possible attack of the U.S. on Syria".

BOLGE: During a lunch PM Erdogan was having with 20 MPs, Ayhan Zeynep Tekin Boru, an Adana MP from AKP (Justice and Development Party), complained to the Premier about Binali Yildirim, Minister of Transportation, and how Yildirim disregarded the report Boru has submitted to him on irregularities in Turk Telekom (Turkish Telecommunications Co.).

ZAMAN: Jvrg Metger, the German Federal Republic's Deputy Chief of Mission, payed a visit to Adana's Deputy Governor Mehmet Demir. Metger stated that he would be having a series of meetings with several authorities in Adana and Hatay provinces.

OZGUR GUNDEM: The human rights report of DEHAP (Democratic People's Party) expressed that charges reportedly were brought and prosecutions started against 177 (DEHAP) party members and representatives of democratic mass organizations in the last two months because of demonstrations and activities they carried out. According to the report, one person was allegedly killed extra-judicially, five people lost their lives because of torture, 333 people were taken into custody and 106 people were sentenced.

OZGUR GUNDEM: Some villagers, who returned to their villages in the southeastern region of Turkey in 2001 after being displaced in 1994, reportedly are being forced to enroll as village guards by military units. The six villagers (allegedly) had to take up arms forcibly; others were reportedly given notice and allowed a specified time to do the same. The villagers conveyed their complaints about the issue to Goc-Der (Migrants' Solidarity and Culture Association)

SABAH (GUNEY): Gokhan Gundogdu, son of Yunus Gundogdu, a businessman who founded Gundogdu Private Schools in Adana, came back to Adana after successfully completing his university studies at Hartwick College, where he earned a \$100,000 worth of scholarship to study economics and business administration. Upon his return to Adana, Gundogdu has embarked upon founding a library in their private schools, giving the library the name "John Clemens" to honor the founder of Hartwick College in the U.S.

BOLGE / EKSPRES: Adana Deputy Governor Nevzat Ergun, Adana Mayor Aytac Durak, and many visitors participated in the opening of a photographic exhibition of Haluk Uygur which emphasized and celebrated the simultaneous presence of various religious beliefs in Turkey, where the majority is comprised of Muslims. Adana American Consul Walter Scott Reid participated in the event as well and was quoted as saying "It is not surprising to see the presence of a variety of religious faiths in Turkey, since Anatolia has been a cradle for ages for a number of faiths, many of which originated here".

CUMHURIYET: Walter Russel Mead, one of the prominent minds of the Council on Foreign Relations, which is an organization renowned for establishing the guidelines of U.S. foreign policy, said that the establishment of a Kurdish state would not comply with the national interests of the U.S.

REID